



# MEMORANDUM

---

**To:** Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Richard Hicks, Interim City Manager  
Dwan Bell, Public Utilities Director  
Jon Hawley, Grants Administrator

**Date:** March 25, 2022

**Re:** Consideration - Grant Application for Vulnerability and Risk Assessment

---

***BACKGROUND:***

On February 21, 2022, North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) published a Notice of Funding Opportunity through the Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Fund (TIRF). This program has \$15 million in total funding to disburse, and may fund 100 percent of project costs. Per the notice, "funds can be used to ensure transportation resilience against natural disasters." This may include: projects that update and prepare transportation infrastructure for storms, mudslides, and flooding events; risk assessments for critical transportation routes; and creating a community-informed flood risk and vulnerability assessment to identify resilience gaps and project opportunities for transportation routes.

In consultation with our on-call engineering firm, AECOM, City staff would like to propose a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment be performed for Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, and Camden County – the partner entities of Pasquotank-Camden Emergency Management (PCEM). This VRA would provide a technical assessment of all transportation assets in our three jurisdictions, identify the most critical and vulnerable assets, and provide detailed project recommendations that would support future grant applications.

Pasquotank, Camden, and PCEM have already given their support for this application. We request Council authorization to submit it. The application is due March 31.

***ANALYSIS:***

The City, Pasquotank and Camden do not have a comprehensive assessment of our communities' transportation assets' vulnerability to future disasters. The City has completed several flooding-related studies, but these focused on stormwater infrastructure within relatively small geographic areas. Simply put, we don't know our most vulnerable roads and bridges and what projects would provide cost-effective

resilience. Even the Albemarle Hazard Mitigation Plan for numerous local units of government provides only a very high-level overview of disaster types and risks.

AECOM is proposing to use a team that has performed numerous Vulnerability and Risk Assessments (VRAs) and similar studies. Under our proposal, the City, Pasquotank, Camden, and AECOM will form a Project Management Team and Technical Advisory Committee comprised of local stakeholders and experts. In collaboration with these groups, AECOM will assess all transportation assets within the three jurisdictions. The firm will use the Federal Highway Administration's Vulnerability Assessment Scoring Tool, a widely accepted methodology, to assess an asset's vulnerability to not only disasters, but future stressors such as sea-level rise. Assets' connectivity to key facilities and criticality in emergency response will also be considered to identify the most-vulnerable and highest-priority assets. Based on these rankings, AECOM will help City and County officials develop priority projects. At City staff's request, the highest-priority projects in each jurisdiction will undergo detailed predesign analysis to provide a clear path to implementation.

The project partners and AECOM are in firm agreement that a regional approach is the smartest, most cost-effective way to perform this assessment. This VRA will benefit from many decades of collaboration between the City, Pasquotank, and Camden in emergency management.

AECOM is still finalizing its scope of work and project costs for the VRA. We anticipate it to be approximately \$500,000. As stated previously, this is a 100-percent grant with no matching requirements.

As a final note, City staff acknowledge that we are also proposing a separate application to TIRF for urgently needed repairs to the Rivershore Road-Fairfax Avenue bridge (see separate memo). We would not normally send multiple applications in one funding cycle, but we believe both projects are greatly needed. We also expect that the applications combined will be approximately \$2.5 million or less, which is well within the suggested maximum grant award.

***STAFF RECOMMENDATION:***

By motion, authorize a grant application to the Transportation Infrastructure Resiliency Fund for a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment of the City, Pasquotank County, and Camden County.